DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 115 677 TM 004 948

AUTHOR	Nesset, Bonna; And Others
TITLE	Lake Harriet Elementary Open Classroom Evaluation, 1973-1974.
INSTITUTION	Minneapolis Public Schools, Minn. Dept. of Research and Evaluation.
REPORT NO	C-73-45
PUB DATE	Jun 74
NOTE	43p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Criterion Referenced Tests; *Elementary Education; Mathematics; *Open Education; *Open Plan Schools; Parent Attitudes; Parent Participation; Participant Satisfaction; *Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; Reading; Student Attitudes; Student Evaluation; Teacher Attitudes; Testing Problems
IDENTIFIERS	Lake Harriet Elementary School; Minneapolis Public Schools; Minnesota (Minneapolis)

ABSTRACT

The Lake Harriet Elementary School Open Classroom was initiated at the request of parents in the summer of 1973. The program was implemented in the fall of 1973. This evaluation indicates that, after the first year of operation, the original goals for the program are being met: The students, for the most part, are performing at normal or above normal levels in reading and math, and they say they like the open classroom. The teachers feel they have input into their own programs feel free to make constructive criticisms about the program. The parents are very highly involved in the program and generally feel their children have made favorable progress this year academically and socially. Only four parents indicated a desire to change their child to the regular program next year. Two problem areas stood out this year: lack of quiet areas for students to use for independent study and lack of an adequate system for progress reporting to parents. Recommendations are given. Comments and attitude questionnaire results from students and parents and teachers' program evaluations are included in the appendix. (Author)

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ED115677

Minneapolis Public Schools

Lake Harriet Elementary Open Classroom Evaluation, 1973-1974

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TM004 948

C-73-45
June 1974

Research and Evaluation Department
Planning and Support Services

Minneapolis Public Schools

Lake Harriet Elementary Open Classroom Evaluation, 1973-1974

Summary

The Lake Harriet Elementary School Open Classroom was initiated at the request of parents in the summer of 1973. The program was implemented in the fall of 1973. i.

This evaluation indicates that, after the first year of operation, the original goals for the program are being met: The students, for the most part, are performing at normal or above normal levels in reading and math, they say they like the open classroom and the teachers, they feel they have input into their own programs, and they feel free to make constructive criticisms about the program. 1-7

The parents are very highly involved in the program and generally feel their children have made favorable progress this year academically and socially. Only four parents indicated a desire to change their child to the regular program next year. 8-10

Two problem areas stood out this year: lack of quiet areas for students to use for independent study and lack of an adequate system for progress reporting to parents. 7, 9

Recommendations are given. Comments and attitude questionnaire results from students and parents and teachers' program evaluations are included in the appendix. 11, 14-37

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June 1974 Research and Evaluation Department

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EVALUATION PREFACE

The Lake Harriet Open Educational Program actually started during the summer of 1973 when a group of Lake Harriet parents met with the West Area Superintendent and the Lake Harriet principal to determine whether or not it was possible to start an Open Educational Program for the fall of 1973. It was determined with the approval of the West Area Superintendent and the Lake Harriet staff that an attempt would be made to start an Open Educational Program at Lake Harriet in September of 1973.

This was accomplished. The following broad goals helped to determine the direction of the program:

1. Proficiency and basic skills - reading, mathmatics and spelling.

2. Development of the attitude of inquiry and the tools of inquiry.

3. Capitalization on and stimulation of normal curiousity and eagerness to learn.

4. Promotion of self discipline.

5. Increasing the means by which children and parents can be involved in program planning and evaluation of the needs and progress of the pupil.

6. Providing for additional ways in which pupils can participate in planning and use of their time.

My opinion of the program as it has developed this year is a positive one. The evaluation following this preface, I believe, will show that the goals have generally been met. It is my hope that this program can operate next year with a further degree of efficiency and also offer one more alternative to the Southwest Cluster.

nb/74

Minneapolis Public Schools

Lake Harriet Elementary Open
Classroom Evaluation,
1973-1974

The Open Classroom Program

Lake Harriet School serves about 250 children in grade K-6. Fifty of these children were enrolled in the open classroom during its first year of operation (1973-74). The open classroom occupied the entire basement floor of the school, excluding the gymnasium. This space provided three large "classrooms" and a sizeable expanse of hallways to be used for teaching, studying, gathering and meeting, and collecting and displaying. The rest of the student body was housed on the main floor and the second floor of the building and was organized into continuous progress classrooms. Interaction between the two programs took place at recess and lunch times, during some physical education and music courses, and during voluntary mini-courses which were available to all students in the school. In addition, some kindergarteners attended some reading classes upstairs.

The open classroom staff consisted of two full time teachers and one half-time teacher aide.[1] In addition, there were about 20 parent volunteers who sometimes served as teacher aides, sometimes worked with children needing individual attention in some area, or sometimes taught special interest courses (For example, an architect might volunteer to come and talk about architecture and how to apply some concepts to make better use of open area space, and this would result in a class project).

The only mandatory courses were math and language arts. For these classes the students were divided into primary and intermediate units. While fourth, fifth, and sixth graders would be working in the same math class, at the same appointed time, and on the same subject area, each would

[1] One of the full-time teachers presently in the program came into the school to replace another teacher after the year was more than half over. The staff member who was paid as a half-time teacher aide actually was a fully qualified teacher who worked full time.

be working at his or her own level. Option times were also regularly scheduled. A few of the options which were available to students this year were wood shop, animal center, green growers, Spanish, and airplanes.

Reporting to parents was on a demand schedule, and consisted of informal meetings between staff and parents whenever either felt they were needed.

The Open Classroom Students

Boys made up 56% of the open classroom population. There were 28 boys and 22 girls in the program. An unequal representation by grade level and by sex within grade levels occurred. Almost half of the open class students were in kindergarten or third grade. Few first and second graders were enrolled. Fifth graders were predominantly girls, while the sixth graders were all boys. The children fell into the following class groupings:

Grade	Girls	Boys	Total
K	7	5	12
1	2	2	4
2	1	2	3
3	4	7	11
4	2	4	6
5	6	2	8
6	0	6	6
	22	28	50

Student Achievement

Many proponents of open education question the use of standardized achievement tests to measure student progress in the basic skills, contending that standardized tests stress rote learning and quick recall of facts (which are not stressed in the open classroom) while they do not measure many effects of open education (such as increased levels of student responsibility, enjoyment of learning, creativity, and independent judgment).

According to the Educational Research Service's 1974 Summary of Research on Open Education, work is presently being done on the development of testing instruments that will be more applicable to the open classroom than standardized achievement tests, but no such evaluation instruments are now available.

After discussing the pros and cons of various methods of assessing student achievement, a committee of open classroom parents, teachers, and school administrators approved a proposal to attempt to measure open classroom students' achievement levels in reading and math by means of criterion referenced types of evaluation.

To assess reading levels, teachers individually administered to each of the open classroom students an informal reading inventory correlated with the American Book Company (ABC) Series. Figure 1 shows that 46 of the 50 students (92%) were reading at or above the instructional level appropriate to their grade.

To assess math achievement, the open classroom teachers compiled a list of math skills and concepts from the Minneapolis Public Schools Department of Elementary Curriculum's Teaching Elementary School Mathematics and from the teaching materials actually used in their classes. These skills and concepts were then grouped into grade levels. Each student was rated on each skill and concept and checked off as having mastered the concept or not. Mastery was judged as having the ability to do calculations and solve problems rather than as having been exposed to or be able to recognize examples of the concept. For example, a child who knew how to use weights of various dimensions would not be judged as having mastered the concept "weight." The child would have to know how to compute and convert units in problems involving various dimensions of weight.

Student Grade Level

Student Reading Level			K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
	(Grade 6)	L		x			xxxx	xxx xxx	xxx xx	16
	(Grade 5)	K			x	xxxxx xxxx			*	11
	(Grade 4)	J		x	x		xx	**		6
	(Grade 3)	I		x						1
		H				x				1
	(Grade 2)	G	xx		x					3
		F								0
	(Grade 1)	E	x							1
		D	xx							2
		C		x		*				2
		B								0
		A	xxxxx							5
			xx							2
			12	4	3	11	6	8	6	50

Open classroom students' instructional reading levels based on an informal inventory correlated with the American Book Company Series.

* Student reading below grade level
x Student reading at or above grade level

Grades shown in ( ) are the instructional grade levels corresponding to reading levels A - L.

Figure 1

In Figure 2, the numbers to the right of the line indicate those classes in which most students have mastered the concepts listed. For example, it can be seen that (1) all fourth graders and most of the first, second and third graders have mastered those concepts up to and including addition and subtraction of whole numbers taught in grades K-3, or that (2) at least half, and in most cases all, of the sixth graders have mastered all the concepts listed for grades K-6.

Student Attitudes

Questionnaires concerning students' attitudes toward school were completed by all 50 students in the open classroom during the third week in May, 1974. These questionnaires were read to 10 kindergarteners and one first grader who, the teacher judged, would have had trouble reading the questions themselves. All other students completed the questionnaires independently and anonymously.

Attitudes were generally very positive toward the open classroom. Boys tended to be slightly more positive than did girls, and the sixth grade boys were the most positive of all.[2]

About three-fourths of the students had been in the open classroom all year. All but two of the 50 students said they thought the open classroom was much different from the regular classrooms. Ninety-four percent (all but three students) said that they enjoyed being in the open classroom this year and that they thought they had learned a lot this year.

[2] This is encouraging since these children will be attending a traditional junior high school next year, and research suggests that open elementary schools and traditional junior highs have more in common than traditional elementary schools and traditional junior highs, making for an easier transition. For example: McPartland, James and Others. "Student Reactions to the Transition from Open Elementary School to Junior High School: A Case Study." Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Center for the Study of Social Organization of Schools, 1972.

facts thru 81		0	2	9	6	8	6
facts with 0		0	2	9	6	8	6
facts with remainders		0	0	1	6	8	6
renaming 10's--100's		0	2	9	6	8	6
x by 1 digit		0	2	9	6	8	6
x and by 2 digits	0	0	0	1	6	8	6
x and by 3 digits	0	0	0	0	6	8	6
1st-2nd-3rd-4th-5th-6th							
Fractions							
part of whole	0	4	3	10	6	8	6
subset of set	0	3	3	10	6	8	6
proper--improper	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
renaming	0	2	3	10	6	8	6
plus and minus	0	3	3	10	6	6	6
plus and frac--whole	0	0	0	0	6	6	6
plus and frac--mixed	0	0	0	0	4	6	6
x and	0	0	0	0	3	4	6
place value	0	3	3	10	4	6	5
plus and minus decimals	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
mult & divide decimals	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
4th-5th-6th							
Graphs							
picture	0	3	3	9	5	8	6
bar	0	3	3	9	5	8	6
line	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
circle	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Measurement-Money							
linear	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
liquid	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
dry	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
time	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
dozen	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
money	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
weight	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
metric	0	0	0	0	5	8	4
temperature	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
speed	0	0	0	0	5	5	3
perimeter	0	0	0	0	5	5	3
area	0	0	0	0	5	5	3
Geometry							
shapes	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
line-segment-ray	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
planes	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
angles	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
curves	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
triangles	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
circle	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
cube	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
sphere	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
5th-6th							
Percents							
as ratio	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
as common	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
as decimal fraction	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
use of prop to solve %	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
discount	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
interest	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

Figure 2. Number of students at each grade level who have mastered curriculum-based math skills and concepts

Grade Level	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number of Students	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
Kindergarten							
Mathematics							
count to 30	11	4	3	11	6	8	6
count 10 objects	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
write 1 to 10	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
read to 10	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
+ and - thru 5	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
1st thru 5th	11	4	3	11	6	8	6
b: (side-low-tween)	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
big--small	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
patterns	11	4	3	11	6	8	6
long, short, etc.	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
vocabulary	11	4	3	11	6	8	6
Kindergarten--1st							
Reading--Writing--Counting--Rounding							
1's to 10	12	3	3	11	6	8	6
10's to 100	9	3	3	11	6	8	6
1's to 100	7	4	3	10	6	8	6
2's to 100	0	3	3	10	6	8	6
5's to 100	3	3	3	10	6	8	6
to 1000	0	0	2	10	6	8	6
1st--2nd--3rd							
Addition, Subtraction of Whole Numbers							
facts thru 6	12	4	3	11	6	8	6
facts thru 10	9	4	3	11	6	8	6
facts thru 18	2	3	3	11	6	8	6
rename 10's--100's	0	3	3	10	6	8	6
rename 10's	0	3	3	10	6	8	6
rename with 0	0	3	2	10	6	8	6
three 1 digit	1	3	2	10	6	8	6
two-place column	1	3	2	10	6	8	6
three-place column	0	0	2	9	6	8	6
four-& five-place column	0	0	2	9	6	8	6
1st-2nd-3rd-4th-5th							
Multiplication, Division Whole Numbers							
facts thru 81	0	0	2	9	6	8	6
facts with 0	0	0	2	9	6	8	6
facts with remainders	0	0	2	9	6	8	6
renaming 10's--100's	0	0	2	9	6	8	6
x by 1 digit	0	0	2	9	6	8	6
x and by 2 digits	0	0	0	1	6	8	6
x and by 3 digits	0	0	0	0	6	8	6
1st-2nd-3rd-4th-5th-6th							
Fractions							
part of whole	0	4	3	10	6	8	6
subset of set	0	3	3	10	6	8	6
proper--improper	0	0	0	0	5	8	6
renaming	0	2	3	10	6	8	6
plus and minus	0	3	3	10	6	6	6
plus and frac--whole	0	0	0	0	6	6	6
plus and frac--mixed	0	0	0	0	4	6	6
x and	0	0	0	0	3	4	6
place value	0	3	3	10	4	6	5
plus and minus decimals	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
mult & divide decimals	0	0	0	0	1	1	3

Ninety-two percent (all of the boys and all but four girls) said they liked the open area space better than a regular classroom. Ninety percent (all of the boys and 77% of the girls) said they thought the kind of freedom they had in the open classroom is good for students their age.

Ninety percent said they were getting to study things that interest them, but less than half (46%) said they had a lot to say about what they studied. About one-fourth said the teachers expect them to do more school work than they can do.

Eighty-eight percent said the teachers helped them do their best, and 82% said they could get help when they needed it. Eighty-four percent (96% of the boys and 68% of the girls) said they liked having more than one teacher working with them. Eighty-four percent also said they thought that students helping other students was a good way to learn some things, and that they liked having volunteers teaching them some things.

About three-fourths of the students, both boys and girls, said they usually felt free to say what they felt in school.

Ninety-two percent said they had made some friends this year who were a different age than they were, and about two-thirds said they have as many friends in the rest of the school as they did before.

The students did see some problems with the open classroom. Over one-third said they didn't think they could study as well in the open classroom as they could in a regular classroom, and 96% said they would like more quiet space where they could work alone. Sixty percent (82% of the girls and 43% of the boys) said it was too noisy to study much of the time.

A copy of the student questionnaire and questionnaire results is included in the appendix. Students' write-in comments are also included.

Parent Attitudes

During the third week in May, questionnaires were mailed to the parents of every child in the program. If parents had more than one child in the program--there were three pairs of siblings in the open classroom--they were asked to fill out a questionnaire for each child. These responses, then, reflect parents' opinions of the open classroom for their particular child, not their attitudes toward open education in general.

Eighty percent of the questionnaires (40 out of 50 mailed out) were returned completed for a return rate of 80%.[3] This return rate, even before follow-up efforts were made, would appear to reflect a high level of parent involvement. Respondents included parents of 21 of the 22 girls in the open classroom and 18 of the 28 boys. There was no response bias by grade. The distribution of returned questionnaires for students' at different grade levels was as follows:

Students' Grade	Number of Parents Responding	Number of Students
K	10	12
1	3	4
2	2	3
3	10	11
4	5	6
5	7	8
6	3	6
	40	50

Parental response to the open classroom was generally very favorable. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated they wanted their child to participate in the open classroom again next year. Five percent indicated their children would be going to junior high next year, five percent said they hadn't decided in which program their child would be enrolled and 10% (four parents) said they thought they would switch their child to a continuous progress program next year.

[3] Additional questionnaires were received after June 3, too late to be included in this report.

Parental involvement in the open classroom also was high. Although parents of girls said they participated and volunteered more, they tended to be more critical of the program than did parents of boys.[4] Eighty-five percent of the responding parents (90% of those with girls and 79% of those with boys) said they had volunteered to help in the open classroom. Over three-fourths of parents had visited the school over once a month and almost six out of ten had visited once a week or more. Many of these visits were as parent volunteers. About half of the respondents (29% of those with girls and 68% of those with boys) said their participation in their child's school had increased since their child had enrolled in the open classroom.

All of the parents said they felt free to visit the school and ask questions and all of them were in favor of having parent volunteers as aides or teachers for special interest classes.

About nine out of ten respondents said they saw the open classroom as a basically different kind of education, that they felt involved in program planning for their child, that they were in favor of having several teachers work with their child instead of just one, and that the staff had responded to any concerns they had expressed.

Overall, about six out of ten parents said they felt the school had taken a greater interest in their child because of the open classroom. Parents of boys were much more positive about this question. Seventy-nine percent of those with boys compared with 38% of those with girls endorsed this question.

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[4] Research does indicate a more noticeable effect of open education on boys than on girls in terms of increased self-esteem and self-concept. For example, Kohler, P. Terence. "A Comparison of Open and Traditional Education: Conditions That Promote Self-Concept." Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, 1973.

There was some dissatisfaction with this year's system of progress reporting. Two-thirds of the respondents said they did not feel the school staff had kept them well informed of their child's progress. One-fourth of the girls' parents and 42% of the boys' parents said they felt well-informed. There was evidence that a different system of progress reporting would be favored by parents. Over three-fourths said they were not satisfied with the present system of reporting to parents.

Parents were asked to assess their child's progress (favorable, not favorable, or not certain) in various areas. While a child's progress or lack of progress in any area over a period of a whole year cannot be directly attributed to the open classroom, it is one indication of parental satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their child's development.

The majority of the parents noted favorable progress in all of the areas mentioned: 98% in relationships with adults, 95% in attendance, 93% in liking of teachers, 88% in self-confidence, 88% in enthusiasm towards school, 80% in eagerness to learn, 80% in relationships with other children, 80% in discipline problems, 80% in curiosity, 78% in relationships with brothers and sisters, 75% in independence, 70% in concern for others, 70% in problem solving ability, 70% in accepting responsibility, 68% in creativity, 65% in progress in reading, 65% in progress in math, 63% in ability to complete tasks, 55% in initiative, 53% in development of self-discipline, and 53% in taking care of personal possessions.

Parents of boys were more likely to have noted favorable progress than were parents of girls in: eagerness to learn, attendance, relationships with other children, development of self-discipline, ability to complete tasks, and taking care of personal possessions.

On the other hand, parents of girls more frequently noted favorable progress in: independence and relationships with brothers and sisters.

Even though the majority of the parents noted favorable progress in all the areas, some parents did note areas where progress was not favorable for their child. About one-fourth of the parents cited not favorable effects in taking care of personal possessions, and one-fifth noted not favorable progress in development of self-discipline.

A copy of the parent questionnaire and the questionnaire results are included in the appendix. Parents' write-in comments are also included.

Recommendations

1. One element missing from the program is an ongoing evaluation system. This evaluation was a hurry-up, after-the-fact affair, and only the exceptional cooperation of parents and staff accounted for obtaining all the data at hand in such a short period of time. Hopefully, evaluation could become an integral part of program planning and implementation for next year rather than just an attempt to assess outcomes. The first place to start in planning for next year should be a thorough analysis of the student and parent comments included in the appendix of this report. Time limitations did not permit this to be accomplished before this report was issued.
2. The open classrooms' physical space should be rearranged so that (a) students can be provided with more private, quiet areas for independent study, and (b) students can be more directly observable by and accessible to the teachers at all times.
3. The staff, in cooperation with the parents, should devise a system of regular, periodic reporting to parents. The staff could also consider some form of a teacher-student contract system to frequently

and regularly assess each students' progress in learning.

4. Every attempt should be made to maintain the level of parent involvement exhibited this first year.

Appendix

Evaluation of Open Classroom
1973-74
Lake Harriet School
Gordon Berg, June Jones, Irene Peterson

MAJOR PROBLEMS IN 1973-74

Reporting to parents on program and progress

Daily and yearly progress records for students

Up- and downstairs conflicts within the school

Communications with home (announcements, etc.)

Keeping track of and using aide availability and skills

Basic skills presentation

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1974-75

Devise Open Classroom system of reporting by cooperation with parents

Divide the year into eight-week periods for reporting and options

Half day off for teachers for evaluation meeting at the end of each eight-weeks period

One day for teacher-pupil conference time for each teacher every third week in rotation

Exchange program with upstairs students (weekly? monthly?)

More precise and efficient "mailbox" system for student-carried notices

Designated time for planning daily for all staff of Open Classroom together

Desperate need for more centers and self-directed materials

Better use of space

A quiet area is necessary

If there are kindergarten-level children, there must be a defined program with integration with upper age levels. This requires adequate staffing.

POSITIVE ASPECTS, 1973-74

Students, for the most part, have developed an independent attitude in their functioning in school.

Socially, students have become a group.

Students are beginning to show selectivity in options.

Students are aware of themselves as a part of the Open Classroom within Lake Harriet School.

A relaxed atmosphere between teachers and students has developed.

Attendance is high.

All students like open room and seem happy.

A variety of adults interact with children daily and over the year.

A wide range of options has been available.

A lack of pressure has created a relaxed atmosphere.

Parent cooperation and involvement has been excellent.

Minneapolis Public Schools
Research and Evaluation Department

N=50

To: Open Classroom Students:

We really want to know what you think about school this year. We want to know what you liked about the open classroom and what you disliked so we can make it better next year. We also want you to write your suggestions where we forgot to ask how you feel about something important to you. Write whatever you want on these questionnaires, and don't sign your name.

Circle the appropriate response.

	Yes	No
(1) Have you gone to school in the open classroom all this year?	76%	24%
(2) Do you think the open classroom is much different from the regular classrooms?	96%	4%
(3) Have you enjoyed being in the open classroom this year?	94%	6%
(4) Do you like the open area space better than a regular classroom?	92%	8%
(5) Do you think you can study as well in the open classroom as you could in a regular classroom?	62%	38%
(6) Do you think you have learned a lot this year?	94%	6%
(7) Do you think the kind of freedom you have in the open classroom is good for students your age? (2% DK)	90%	8%
(8) Do you like having more than one teacher working with you?	84%	16%
(9) Are you getting to study things that interest you this year?	90%	10%
(10) Do the teachers expect you to do more school work than you can? (6% DK)	26%	68%
(11) Do the teachers help you to do your best? (2% DK)	88%	10%
(12) Do you think that students teaching other students is a good way to learn some things?	84%	16%
(13) Do you have as many friends in the rest of the school as you did before?	68%	32%
(14) Have you made more friends this year who are a different age than you are? (2% DK)	92%	6%
(15) Is it too noisy to study very much of the time?	60%	40%
(16) Would you like more quiet space where you can work alone when you want?	96%	4%
(17) Do you have a lot to say about what you study this year?	46%	54%
(18) Do you like having volunteers teaching you? (2% DK)	84%	14%
(19) Can you get help when you need it?	82%	18%
(20) Do you usually feel free to say what you feel in school?	72%	28%

(21) Check the correct answer

(21) Are you a

44% 1. Girl

56% 2. Boy

(22) What grade would you be in if you were in a regular classroom?

24% 1. Kindergarten

8% 2. First

6% 3. Second

22% 4. Third

12% 5. Fourth

16% 6. Fifth

12% 7. Sixth

(23) How is the open classroom different from the rest of the school?

(24) What one mini course option did you like the most?

(25) What would you change about the open classroom?

(26) What do you like best about the open classroom?

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Students' Comments

23. How is the open classroom different from the rest of the school?

Kindergarten

G . Different courses
G . Doesn't have desks in kindergarten upstairs
G . Lockers are different, they have smaller rooms
G . More fun
G . More things, toys, games, cards
G . A lot upstairs
G . More people
B . More teachers
B . Don't know
B . Read more upstairs
B . It's bigger, upstairs is not so quiet
B . Lots of kids, good things to do

First

G . You don't do any paper
G . I don't know
B . I don't know

Second

G . There's to much spoke and not much attention
B . Free time, options more things you can do here

Third

G . Because you can work as fast, or as slow as you can
G . You learn different things that you can't in the other classes
G . More kids. You get to decide more things on our own
G . You can go as fast as you can go
B . You get ten o'clock option
B . You want more to sit in your desk most of the day
B . You have more freedom
B . Different options - different schedule
B . You get more freedom
B . We do stuff that the other rooms can't
B . More freedom and more space

23. continued

Fourth

G . The teacher is not as bossy as upstairs

G . You don't have as much work to do and you have more freedom

B . Open classroom is not as strict

B . You have much more freedom

B . You do more and you make more friends

B . Your freer

Fifth

G . You get more free time

G . You have more freedom and the teachers seem to be nicer

G . Because you have more freedom

G . You get to pick your classes

G . You can sign up for things like language or field trips

G . You get to go where you want to go to except for L. art and math

B . There are three home bases, there are more things to do

Sixth

B . Your more free and you can do what you wanna do

B . It is more open and you can work at your own speed

B . You get to do more things in an open room than a regular classroom

B . They give you a lot of freedom

B . There's more room

B . There is a lot more freedom

24. What one mini course option did you like the most?

Kindergarten

G . Soap and wax carving

G . Painting

G . Painting

G . Painting

G . T-shirts

G . Soap and wax carving

G . Textile painting

B . No minicourse - K

B . Airplanes

24. continued

B . Animal center
B . Wood shop
B . Kindergarten - none

First

G . Pottery
G . All of them
B . Airplanes
B . Movies (center)

Second

G . Theater activities
B . Green growers

Third

G . Textile painting
G . Stamps and history
G . Triple FFF
G . Ceramics
B . Movie group
B . Linden Hils history
B . Blood and guts
B . Movie group
B . FFF club
B . Math games
B . Chess

Fourth

G . Gym
G . Animal center and airplanes
B . Chess
B . Blood and guts
B . Movie group

Fifth

G . Social studies
G . Animals - listen - math
G . Animal center, girls cooking

24. continued

G . Soap and wax carving
G . Gymn or recess
G . Textile painting
B . Chess

Sixth

B . News fond and told
B . Pottery
B . Movie group
B . Movie group
B . Gum
B . Chess

25. What would you change about the open classroom?

Kindergarten

G . People should have desks
G . (name) would be the only teacher
G . Nothing
G . No schedu'es - just play
G . Home desk
G . The boys fort
B . I don't know
B . The teachers - new ones like (name)
B . More reading
B . More wood to work with, more nails
B . Play house should be where the animals are

First

G . Have a quiet place
G . Math
B . I would like to have something other than desks
B . Don't know

Second

G . 1 space for k's - 1 space for fst and so on
B . Nothing

Third

G . Stop all the fight

25. continued

G . A place where no one can bother you

G . Not so many kids, and no schedules to fill out

G . The noise and the fighting

B . Have new teachers

B . The amount of people

B . Have a longer work period - have it quieter

B . Nothing

B . I would make it quiet

B . Nothing

B . Nothing

Fourth

G . It's good the way it is

G . Have it more open and don't have classes at a certain time

B . Chess

B . Nothing

B . The noise and the running around

B . American history

Fifth

G . The way the rooms are

G . Have lunch any time - the privacy there is hardly any

G . Privacy and go swimming any time you want and eat lunch any time and eat down here

G . Make it quieter

G . Everything

G . The schedules

B . I would change the animal center and get more animals

Sixth

B . Have 11:30 - 12:30 lunch option

B . Have only kids that can work independently so the program would go better

B . The setup

B . The animal center

26. What do you like best about the open classroom?

Kindergarten

G . News and views - book fair best

G . Painting, movies

26. continued

G . Nothing

G . More things to do

G . (name), lots of paint and papers

G . Options

G . Animal center

B . Lots of teachers

B . (name) and (name)

B . Chocolate milk

B . Nat!

B . Good things to do - lots of kids

First

G . Animal center - reading - options - listening

G . Reading - language arts

B . We get to have math and L.A. at different times. We get options

B . Options - good kinds of choices

Second

G . My friends and hard math and reading

B . Math and options

Third

G . You get more time to do what you want to do

G . There are more things to do

G . Lots of things to do - we often have experiments that work out pretty good

G . The freedom - classes and room

B . You get out of the other classrooms

B . That you aren't made to work all day and are free to do what you want most of the day

B . I have nice teachers and you can do a lot

B . Options

B . You choose what you want to do

B . You have more freedom then in the other classrooms

B . Options

Fourth

G . The teacher don't make you work as hard

G . Everything

B . All the teachers know what I have - (name) helps me the best

26. continued

B . More freedom

B . We have nice teachers and option and movies group

B . You get to have more stuff

Fifth

G . That you have a lot of free time

G . Your freedom and classes the way they teach the class

G . The freedom, and options

G . You get to pick your classes and a teacher isn't always with you

G . Options

G . It's not so strick

B . There are a lot of things to do

Sixth

B . Everything

B . It gives me a chance to work in my more interesting subjects. It also gives me a chance to work at my own

B . All the different courses that you can be in and you don't have to do math and reading all day long

B . All the different classes

B . The kids

B . Being able to set up my own schedule

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N=40

Circle the appropriate response.

		Yes	No
(1)	Do you see the open classroom as a basically different kind of education? (5% NA)	88%	7%
(2)	Do you feel the school has taken a greater interest in your child because of the open classroom? (5% NA)	58%	37%
(3)	Have you felt involved in program planning for your child?	85%	15%
(4)	Have you felt free to visit the school and/or ask questions?	100%	0%
(5)	Are you in favor of having parent volunteers as aides or teachers for special interest classes?	100%	0%
(6)	Have you volunteered to help the open classroom?	85%	15%
(7)	Do you feel the school staff has kept you well informed of your child's progress?	33%	67%
(8)	Are you satisfied with the present system of reporting to parents?	22%	78%
(9)	Do you favor having several teachers work with your child instead of just one? (2% NA)	90%	8%
(10)	Has the staff responded to or acted upon any concerns you may have expressed? (2% NA)	93%	5%

(11) How has your participation in your child's school changed since he or she has been in the open classroom?

48% 1. Increased
17% 2. Hasn't changed
5% 3. Decreased
30% 4. This was child's first year of school

(12) About how many times this year have you visited the school (for any reason)?

0% 1. Never
7% 2. Once or twice
15% 3. Once every few months
5% 4. Once a month
15% 5. Every other week
58% 6. Once or twice a week

(13) Which program do you want your child to follow next year?

80% 1. Open classroom
10% 2. Continuous progress classroom
5% Don't know
5% In junior high next year

How do you view your child's progress this year in the following areas? Circle the appropriate response.

		Favorable	Not Favorable	Not Certain
(14)	Progress in reading	65%	7%	28%
(15)	Progress in math	65%	7%	28%
(16)	Eagerness to learn	80%	7%	13%
(17)	Enthusiasm towards school	88%	10%	2%
(18)	Attendance	95%	0%	5%
(19)	Liking of teachers	93%	5%	2%
(20)	Relationships with other children	80%	5%	15%
(21)	Relationships with brothers and/or sisters	78%	10%	12%
(22)	Relationships with adults	98%	2%	0%
(23)	Concern for others	70%	7%	23%
(24)	Self confidence	88%	5%	7%
(25)	Problem solving ability	70%	2%	28%
(26)	Discipline problems	80%	7%	13%
(27)	Development of self-discipline	53%	20%	27%
(28)	Ability to complete tasks	63%	15%	22%
(29)	Accepting responsibility	70%	12%	18%
(30)	Taking care of personal possessions	53%	27%	20%
(31)	Creativity	68%	10%	22%
(32)	Intiative	55%	15%	30%
(33)	Curiosity	80%	12%	8%
(34)	Independence	75%	10%	15%
(35)	Other (specify)_____			

(OVER)

36. What do you see a the advantages of the open classroom?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

37. What do you see as the disadvantages?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

38. What suggestions do you have for improving the open classroom?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

39. At what grade level is your child currently (if he or she were in a regular class)?

_____1. Kindergarten
_____2. First
_____3. Second
_____4. Third
_____5. Fourth
_____6. Fifth
_____7. Sixth

40. Is your child

_____1. A girl
_____2. A boy

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Parents' Comments

36. What do you see as the advantages of the open classroom?

Kindergarten

G Stimulation of real learning. Variety of learning experiences through optional choices. Opportunity to progress at own rate. Encouragement of: Self-control (internal as opposed to external control) and individual responsibility for choices and decisions.

G Children being more involved in their learning and learning some responsibility for themselves. Closer interaction between pupil-teacher. Hopefully they learn respect for others and what they are doing and an appreciation of time.

G Age range has some advantages. Informal, loving atmosphere is good for young child. Child can proceed at own pace.

G Child progresses at his individual rate; contact with children of various age levels; contact with more than one teacher; child and parent has input in program; child develops initiative, responsibility; more fun.

G Mixed ages, mobility, options, freedom to pursue a project.

G I feel that the open room offers more options for the child as for activities and subject matter. They have a chance to work on their own and learn self reliance. They learn from older students and have a better working relationship with the teachers.

B 1. Exposure to people of differing ages (and teachers of both sexes) and in varying roles, i.e. students teaching and parents volunteering. 2. Increased opportunity to develop responsibility for oneself.

First

G Flexibility, wide range of learning choices, breaks down barriers between age groups, has a variety of teachers to relate to education is potentially more "self directed".

G The chance to progress more rapidly than the standard program for a grade level.

B Age differences together. More choice of individual. Greater freedom for personal achievement.

Second

G The variety of opportunities in learning; there were so many options; so many more chances to get out into the community; more self-reliance and more self-confidence developed; planning time and decision making; but mainly the excellent variety of experiences offered.

B Age range, flexibility in skill development and scheduling.

36. What do you see as the advantages of the open classroom (continued)?

Third

G 1. More child oriented-less teacher oriented. 2. More parent and child involvement in choosing and developing learning experiences. 3. Emphasis on affective and social areas as well as academic areas. 4. Develops child's ability to direct and be responsible for his life-long learning. 5. builds on the child's interests in the acquisition of basic skills.

G Child is free to move about, to make decisions, to request certain Learning opportunities. Child may be able to accumulate enough time to complete a project important to him/her. Some of best teaching has been done by volunteers.

G Limitless opportunities for learning, and personal growth.

B Relating with real experiences especially with children of other age levels. Potential for children to become involved in trips, activities that might otherwise be feasible or considered by individual child.

B Wide exposure to many subjects and subjects within subjects--indepth exploration.

B Freedom of physical and psychological movement. Opportunity to learn from other youngsters of different ages.

B Develop interest in various fields with a time to pursue them.

B Children mature and learn as their abilities and the environment we create allow.

B To generate interest in learning basics and to instill curiosity.

B It stimulates special interests, general curiosity, independence, decision making, creates new relationships between teachers and students.

Fourth

G Our own child has gained social confidence having more time to interrelate with her peers. What she has learned (even little in certain areas) she will retain better because she was choosing to learn it with little outside pressure. She could approach a subject with her own individual approach and potential.

G Wider choice of activities--child can choose areas of interest. Fosters independence and sense of responsibility.

B 1. exposure to varied learning situations. 2. Cross-age learning so child can learn at his level. 3. Growth in decision-making, independence and being responsible to himself. 4. Learning within area of child's special interests. 5. More informal concept learning and development.

B No labeling according to ability or skills. So less feeling of failure or lack of intelligence. The words dummy and flunky are much less used or thought of by students, so more confidence by students.

B 1. Freedom to allow natural curiosity become a valuable learning experience.
2. Development of personal responsibility.
3. Developing meaningful relationships with adults.

36. What do you see as the advantages of the open classroom (continued)?

Fifth

G In this particular school that has two educational programs operating, the open classroom offers an alternative to a child who either needs a change or is not suceeding in the other program. For the mature student it is a great opportunity.

G Students are allowed to study areas they are really interested in.

G Being able to follow a specific interest more than would be allowed in a contained class. Learning by doing rather than by worksheets or books only.

G They get to learn "something" about a number of different and unusual things. Our daughter even learned the basic parts of an airplane. She has been able to learn at her own ability--has progressed quite well.

G 1. exposure to new and varied learning situations.
2. multi-age and cross-age learning and sharing.
3. giving child a chance to learn as he explores hiw own interests.
4. learning responsibility and independence from him/her self.

G Cooperation instead of competition. Letting the child be himself and letting him grow in his strong interest area, instead of improving a system which is frequently boring. "There are no lazy children--it only appears when we decide what their tasks should be."

B 1. Freedom to allow natural curiosity become a valuable learning experience.
2. Development of personal responsibility
3. Developing meaningful relationships with adults.

Sixth

B Opportunities to develop new interests. Encourage self-discipline, organization. My son has enjoyed the open room (but he also enjoyed the traditional program in previous years).

B 1. Flexible scheduling and scheduling of wider range of option-type classes.
2. Mixture of age and grade levels--older children as teachers can be good experience for both or all.
3. Offers child opportunity to organize and be responsible for his time, activities, choices. Should utilize child's judgment.

B The opportunity it affords the student to pursue learning at his speeds, abilities, etc. and the independence of learning to make his own decisions, etc...at the same time, the challenge of pursuing these opportunities in an interesting, informal-type situation. We have been pleased with the diversified program offered in a pilot year program..

37. What do you see as the disadvantages?

Kindergarten

G Lack of awareness by teachers of individual student's progress. Lack of solid, consistent means of evaluation of student progress and consequent lack of communication with parent(s).

G Children who are not inner directed are real discipline problems. In the O. R. children can do a lot of what they want--when they want but when they reach adulthood--life isn't that way.

G Not enough structure in the teaching of reading and arithmetic. Boys often are allowed to pick on smaller children. Boys get away with a lot of behavior which wouldn't be tolerated in girls; this is very threatening to the small child, especially the small girl.

G Occasional chaos. Difficulty of evaluating child's progress. Necessity for better record-keeping, more parent-teacher conferences than this year.

G Lack of self discipline--generally for younger students.

G Less control over the younger students which have difficulty following their schedule. Maybe not enough time spent in 3R's with younger children <u>actually</u> doing their work--(K's in part.). I don't feel my child got much this year in the way of basic reading and math. She's working below her level.

B 1. Amount of time necessary for the greater planning needed to do an Open Classroom well, makes it difficult for the teachers to do all that they and the parents think important (eg. keeping track of each child's progress and then communicating that to parents).

First

G On and off chaos because methods aren't well integrated yet by teachers; physical layout makes it difficult to keep tabs on all areas with staff available. We feel much of our daughter's progress this year has been due to Montessori training--2 + years and her own independent and curious nature--not to school's program.

G Too many different lelves of learning in too many different areas for the staff to adequately teach.

B Newness of program (?)

Second

G The teachers were too busy to actually follow through on the progress of each child, to see (in my case), that her assignments were completed on time, and done correctly, and that she <u>understood</u> what she was doing. My daughter worked along too much because she was bright and they thought she could, and I think her work was done haphazardly.

37. What do you see as the disadvantages? (continued)

Second (continued)

B Uncertainty--growing pains, loss of personal contact in bussle, cnfusion.

Third

G 1. The greater staff and parent effort necessary for a successful open classroom may be difficult to sustain.
2. It is hard to develop the child's sense of responsibility and self-discipline so at times the freedom of the open classroom is abused.

G Not enough supervision; too many kids not doing anything much of the time--in this respect has become more like a free school and less like an open school. Commitment to basic language arts and math skills has not been kept--staff seem content if pupils are moving along but there is no special challenge for excellence or achievement. Two of 3 teachers clearly favor boy pupils over girl pupils; girls do the housekeeping etc; double standard for behavior--boys permitted to fight and have scared smaller girls and boys; some pupils lack the self-discipline to work well in the atmosphere of the open room and spoil things for those who are able to work there.

G Not enough one-to-one with a professional. The smart ones are left on their own too much, I believe. My one daughter had been allowed to work ahead, and the teacher told me she was doing well, but when I carefully looked thru her workbook, I didn't believe she really understaood a lot of what she was doing.

B Diversity of parental expectations.Limitations of staff (not only in numbers but also in background for "open" classroom teaching. Tendency to emphasize weaknesses in children (aggressive become more so; withdrawn more shy).

B The freedom in the academic carrying over in a negative way to general deportment. The behavior (unruly) of the open classroom on outings with classes from upstairs is most deplorable. Children do not heed any suggestion of organized assemblage (a line or partners, etc.).

B Not enough adult supervision. Need of more teachers for msll group instruction.

B Not sure there is progress in reading and math at the level there should be.

B Confusion generated by change and creativity more exhausted teachers.

B Total confusion and frustration if program is not constructed in definite way (is inconsistent).

B As indicated, my only complaint lies in the reporting (evaluation) system, which will be improved in the future, hopefully.

37. What do you see as the disadvantages? (continued)

Fourth

G Longer time to establish self discipline habit for working and best use of time. Child has not worked real hard. Settles for any way to finish work.

G Some children not using time constructively and teachers not always having time to help these children find a direction. In (H. open room - tends to be groups or cliques that exclude other children "in fighting" in the cliques.

B 1. Getting inadequate feedback about child's response to open education and how he has progressed in basic skill levels--(math, reading and comprehension).
2. Perhaps more careful screening has to be done re: who is in the open classroom--for some it may be inappropriate for his particular way of learning.
3. Possible chaos.

B Sometimes a child could feel insecure, lost, unoticed even neglected. This is the area aides and volunteer parents can fill in. The advantages to even these children outweight this possible insecurity.

B None

Fifth

G The determination of tasks is sometimes confusing to the child. Child can easily be distracted to non-productive activities. Therefore I personally feel the system works best for the older student who has been exposed to a more disciplined classroom, therefore having some concept of time usage.

G A child that is not outgoing and is shy tends to be forgotten. It is very difficult for some children to go from the traditional calssroom to the open room.

G Not knowing where the child is academically (at least so far).

G Possible the adjustment to Jr. High may be greater than coming from a structured classroom. We haven't had much--or many-- reports on whether she is doing grade level or working at her full capabilities. If she is in open class next year, we assume the teachers will know if she is ready for Jr. high.

G This year at least, much of the setting has been visibly "chaotic" with much time spent "goofing" and aimlessly doing little academically (I realize this is my view) and not the child's. Also some kind of "reporting" of growth and progress seems to be lacking. My child doesn't do it voluntarily, and I have been too busy to do it for her. I have come to the conclusion that at present, at least in the program at LH, open education may not be for every child, e.g. ones who have difficulty with responsibility.

G Need for more teaching staff--especially teachers committed to the open concept.

B None

37. What do you see as the disadvantages?(continued)

Sixth

B I really don't know how much progress he made in academic subjects. He was above grade level last year, but I don't know what his relative standing would be now. I know he did spend about half of the year at a level of math that was not stimulating.

B
1. Lack of utilization of valuable time by many children.
2. Inability to have staff available at all times for immediate problem solving. Children have to wait.
3. Not enough time for all facets of basic skills.
4. Lack of orientation of volunteer help so that they may be utilized to their highest potential and feel comfortable.

B Not really a disadvantage, but we feel perhaps a little tighter supervision/ discipline control is needed in some areas....also, we would like to see a more frequent, detailed evaluation of progress for the individual, affording parents with a better projection of what the student is accomplishing during the year.

What suggestions do you have for improving the open classroom?

Kindergarten

G More use of logical consequences to strengthen child's inner control with regard to child's taking care of personal possessions, making ood use of time and similar "old fashioned" virtues (but not by "old-fashioned" means of discipline).

G More courses and options for lower level childre. Eliminate kindergarteners (there is not enough assistance for them in planning their day and everything the children do involves reading (most K's cannot read). More variety in art--painting is good--but the field is larger than that.

G Get more staff who appreciate working with young children. Help girls develop a better self-image; I find a lot of subtle sex discrimination in the school--an open school should do better than a traditional school on this score,but I think this one may do worse. Encourage girls to learn chess and building--support them when boys try to exclude them from "their" activities. Make sure no area is unattended by an adult, preferably staff. The behind-the-stage area should not be left unattended as it frequently is.

G Hire teachers with experience in open education and philosophical commitment to it--ditto for aides, hire paid parent co-ordinator to organize volunteers.

G A file on each child similar to a personnel file showing interests and or progress with periodic additions. Instead of written possibly a tape on each child--then faculty could dictate verbal notes--perhaps every 3 months. At the end of the year parents could listen to complete tape and have a good idea of child's progress--ideas--likes--dislikes. This could eliminate time consuming written notes.

G Maybe kindergarten should be excluded from program since most of the time they're separate anyway: 2. More color on walls and displays--maybe kids could paint walls as a project. 3. If K's are included should be more for them to do. 4. Before decisions are made (major ones) should be more discussion with parents. In general there seems to be much more time spent on older children in the program.

B 1. Meetings planned for times that working parents could participate.
2. (I'm sure this is underway) better following what the child is doing in various areas and telling the parents/ hopefully without form tests:
3. Parents should be more involved in decision-making and problem-solving (I'm thinking of when the all-day for kindergarteners was abruptly dropped).

First

G She's really been treading water. The one area she was weak on to start with was spelling--she read very well but couldn't write a thing, and has made very limited progress here in relation to her excellent reading ability, and had she had help, we feel she is ready to spell. How come you listed reading and not writing and spelling this survey? Open schools notoriously are weak here: By leaving it out you are skewing your results, I think.

G More supervision. Teachers should be allowed to recommend to parents how well their children might or do fit into the open room program.

What suggestions do you have for improving the open classroom? (continued)

Second

G
1. Better follow-up on individual progress of each child, to make sure he isn't just getting by.
2. I'd prefer to have the teacher available more to answer the real learning questions of the children. My kids didn't feel the teacher was approachable.

B Continued ways of lowering tension level.

Third

G
1. Establish advisor-advisee system for more direct and regular interaction between staff and student to establish goals and assess progress.
2. Give students more active part in curriculum planning and other class functions.
3. Staff should have more training and exposure at other open classrooms to develop open education skills and get ideas.
4. Need more communication between staff and parents on students' progress
5. Need program evaluation that is problem-solving oriented and yields constructive ideas.
6. Integrate the kindergarten or early-reading child rather than isolating them as much as this year.
7. Need more manipulative materials in math, science, social studies at all age levels.

G Keep relatively inflexible about reading and math time--set aside 2 hours daily for teaching concepts and skills; many parents unaware that this original plan has been abandoned. Text more often for skills acquisition; report to child and parent on accomplishment level in basic skills. Set a single standard for acceptable behavior and apply it equally to girls and boys; encourage girls to see themselves as scientists and mathematicians; reprimand boys who treat girl classmates in discriminatory ways. Pupils who can't handle an open environment should be returned to a more structured program in which they will accomplish something. Have alternatives, options and special classes posted in advance so child can plan programs--under current system there is too much chaos and children miss learning opportunities because they are unaware of what is going on.

G
1. More individual attention and follow-up by a professional
2. I'd like to see an opportunity for foreign language study.
3. I don't feel qualified to answer this--I know so little about schools, only the progress I can see in my children.

B Attempt to remove compartmentalization. Correlate art-science-math-English to greater extent (inentionally rather than coincidently). Greater individualization and progress accounting done by child (with assistance from others).

B More mixing of ages--peer groups travel in cliques. Behavior standars set and followed.

B More teachers

What suggestions do you have for improving the open classroom? (continued)

Third (continued)

B Closer relationship between teacher and parents. Less kindergarten children. Takes up too much time of teachers.

B Larger program. Sincere support from West area supt. on finances, teachers and staff, student transfer.

B To get basic foundation (format) working well before adding too many alternatives--don't try to do too much too soon.

B Changing the present ½ time aide position into a full time one; starting an open room at 1st grade rather than at Kindergarten level. There is a very "open" kindergarten program at LH school already so that it seems unfair to the older children to have kindergarteners take up so much open room staff time.

Fourth

G Since children are not used to the free enviornment there has to be a daily check of their own plannings for the day for the week (by themselves). More support between teacher and parent to remediate as soon as possible a situation. Better and faster evaluation and correction of their work. More organized and attractive presentation of units for the language arts teachings and learnings. No last minute changes of schedules of activities for children.

G More outside teaching help-aides, volunteers, resource people, etc. Possibly more field trips--if adequate supervision available. Additional materials. Better use of space available. Maybe some partitioning and/or storage units. etc. Redecorating.

B 1. Better communication re: child's progress or lack of
2. Better coordination between staff, child and parents (particularly since the parents who have children there are so interested in it) about program, planning, volunteering, etc.
3. More "pulling in" and structure of the present program continues--the 1st year was necessarily uneven with the newness to all concerned--but some changes must be made to have it work better.

B Have the aides and people helping assigned to certain students to watch for above mentioned feelings and to get to know the kid better when they can concentrate on a few (2 or 3). This should not be open knowledge of the students. Then they might loose their feeling of self achievement which open room brings out so well.

Fifth

G Better definition of goals between student and teacher. Maybe a contract system—e.g. will complete something by a mutually agreeable time, or will accomplish these things. In this school, there has been too much interference of parents with the professional staff. Primary methods should be determined by the professional staff. With 100 parents we have 100 opinions-creating chaos.

What suggestions do you have for improving the open classroom? (continued)

Fifth (continued)

G Students and parents need to have a better idea of their progress in different areas. There needs to be more quiet areas for those who like to work in a quiet atmosphere.

G More manipulative materials. Frequent conferences between students and teachers to discuss how they are doing, also what interests they have. I would like my child to know a teacher as a person not just someone to make you learn or to discipline.

G I can't give any concrete suggestions. I work outside our home and have not been able to become as involved as I probably should be. However, our daughter seems to feel she has learned more this year than she would of "upstairs". She has a friend in the regular 5th grade and feels she--our daughter-- has learned more than her friend. Especially in math.

G Some kind of reporting system about child's understanding of concept, reading skills etc. has to be done; ie. accountability of the time the child spends in school--while it maybe shouldn't be essential, it is important as a child grows and progresses to know that he or she is able to handle skills in order to go the next step (gr to Jr-Sr high school) and have some basic skills to continue to learn.

G Fund it! Develop training programs for parent volunteers--they needs to feel the are effective--not just another warm body standing around. (I think this is being done).

Sixth

B I would have liked more attention paid to composition, writing a report, etc. We need a better report system. Regretfully, my working hours coincide with the Open Room hours, and I have not been able to volunteer or even observe. Had the room existed when my older children were in Lake Harriet (and I not working), I would have been a better participatn.

B
1. Equalization of age and grade levels to some extent, at least (e.g. not 15 kdgner's and 6 6th graders).
2. More time spent with basic skills each day.
3. More frequent reporting and evaluating of child's problems and progress among parents and staff and child.
4. Time each day for students to discuss daily problems with staff members.
5. An initial orientation of students coming into the open class room setting so that he or she understands how to function there and how it differs from the traditional setting. Summarizing: Generally, I feel that the open class room experience has been good for my child. If he has suffered academically this year (I'm not sure he has), I believe there were other, rich benefits to compensate.

B Above suggestions might apply here, too. (We feel the evaluation program would be most useful to students at current sixth grade level, going on to another school next year, and whether the past year's program has been a good foundation for entrance into Jr. High School).

What suggestions do you have for improving the open classroom? (continued)

Sixth - Addendum:

B I must further comment on the open classroom since I have so many mixed feelings about the type of education I feel my child has gained/not gained in the past year.

1. The program was very uneven--mainly because it was not adequately planned for and staff found it difficult to teach and plan at the same time.

2. 2. My child was supremely happy and felt it worthwhile even though I myself have had real reservations about the program as it ran this year.

3. 3. It is difficult for parents to assess (and possibly difficult for teachers too) what a child learns in a given situation and indeed, what is valuable for him/her to learn.

4. All children in the program were new to it and thus perhaps had fears about this program versus the contained classroom, all-in-a-row type of situation--where, also, learning may or may not take place. Their anxieties may be well founded since after elementary school they must make a tremendous adjustment to present junior high programs--but at the very least, they must have the cognitive skills to go on.

5. Children are all different--a bright, well motivated child will do well probably in any situation. A less motivated child, one less responsible to himself will have more difficulty in learning and adjusting--and this kind of child's "problems" may be magnified by an informal open classroom situation--or, he may learn in subtle ways which are not "visible" to his teachers and peers. Unfortunately, we cannot compare how a child grows in a more contained environment versus an open one since they are at only one place at a given time in his/her development.

6. I would like to continue having children in the open classroom, but it must become better and more accountable for my own peace of mind. In this school with two programs running side by side, one tends to compare, which may not be fair, but parents must be informed as to a child's growth in every area. Our children will be continuing their education in a rather traditional setting at Southwest and for the time being, we must be advised if at all possible as to how and what he has learned.